



Metropolitan Hilarion: Each Christian should disseminate the word of God

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On 31 October 2010, the commemoration day of St. Luke and the invention of relics of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Ordynka Street, Moscow.

Concelebrating with Metropolitan Hilarion were archimandrite Kirill (Govorun), first deputy chairman of the Education Committee at the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church; archpriest Peter Kholodny, treasurer of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia; hegumen Serafim (Shemyatovsky) from the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; ordained DECR staff members; and clerics of the church.

Singing at the service was the Moscow Synodal Choir conducted by the Honoured Artist of Russia Alexei Puzakov. Among other pieces, they sang 'The Cherubic Hymn' composed by Metropolitan Hilarion at the beginning of his ministry to the Church, when he was a novice at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius.

After the Liturgy Metropolitan Hilarion said a sermon:

"Today we have heard the Lord's parable of the sower and the seed. That reminds us that each of us should be a sower and an attentive listener and a considerate doer of the word of God. Man comes to this world to sow good. The fruits of our life depend on which seeds we sow. The Lord has brought us to the Church to listen to the word of God and to be His associates in disseminating this word throughout the earth, to be sowers. Our life is of value when it brings fruits. A Christian, a member of the Church of Christ, who does not disseminate the word of God, does not fulfill the duty to which the Lord has called him.

"Some people are like rocky ground: the word of God has been sown in them, but has no root and does not sprout. Sometimes these people consider themselves Christians as they follow rituals, but they have no root, in other words, they have no firm foundation of faith, and the word of God has sown in them in vain. They perceive the word of God, but the thorns of earthly cares, sorrows and needs do not allow this word to sprout. They would say, 'I should have been a good sower under favourable circumstances, but there are sorrows in my life, I have not enough means to survive and have to care for tomorrow.'

They have not enough strength and opportunities to grow the word of God in them. These are the listeners to whom 'the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.' (Lk 8:12). Someone would say to himself, 'I shall try to get rid of my bad habits,' but the devil would whisper, 'Why should you get rid of them, is it really necessary? Many people live as you do, and nothing bad happens to them.' If a man listens to this alien voice, renounces his good intentions and does not advance in his spiritual life, he will make no progress.

"Only those people who are like good soil can grow the seed of God's word, and it will bring fruit hundredfold. They know why they have come to this world, why the Lord has brought them to the Church. They know that every day of their life granted to them by God should be lived in vain. These people can bring good fruits. We know that thousands and even millions of people and the whole generations could be nourished by the labours of one man.

"Recently I have visited Japan, where the Orthodox Church has been established by the labours of one man – St. Nicholas of Japan, Equal-to-the-Apostles. When he came to Japan, there was no single Orthodox man there. When he died fifty years later, there were thirty thousand Orthodox Christians and two hundred churches in Japan. Certainly, he was not alone, he had associates, but he educated them, making them not only listeners, but also the sowers of the word of God. Even now, almost one hundred years after his demise, the Orthodox Church of Japan lives and develops. Its members include the descendants of people whom St. Nicholas baptized and enlightened. This means that one man can do great labours, perform missionary deeds and be good sowers of the word of God. Each of us can and must work in the field of God to the extent that they can.

"The Lord tells us, 'the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few' (Lk 10:2). There is an untilled field around each Christian. The soil could be good or rocky; on which thorns may grow, and birds may peck the seeds... but we should disseminate the word of God and give good example to those around us. We should remember that the Lord has called us to sow seeds that will sprout either during our lifetime or after our death and bring fruit hundredfold."

Metropolitan Hilarion congratulated parishioners and reminded them that November 6 is the dedication day of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia will officiate at the festive Divine Liturgy.